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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
MFA FINAL VISUAL PRESENTATION

BY

SHERRI ANDREA MARIE CHABA

A THESIS


SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

IN

DRAWING/INTERMEDIA
DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL 2007



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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled:

Final Visual Presentation

Submitted by Sherri Andrea Marie Chaba in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts.

DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

GRADUATE STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

I hereby release the following works for incorporation into the University Collections,
University of Alberta, as part of the Master of Fine Arts Thesis Collection:

TITLE	DATE	MEDIUM	SIZE
Palimpsest III	2007	Plexiglass, ink, Drypoint print and wood	85 x 77 cm

Insurance Value: \$600.00

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: SHERRI ANDREA MARIE CHABA

TITLE OF THESIS: FINAL VISUAL PRESENTATION

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS GRANTED: MASTER OF FINE ARTS

YEAR THIS DEGREE WAS GRANTED: 2007

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Vestiges: Fragility of Being

Artist Statement

I have spent most of my life surrounded by nature and have developed a predilection for the rhythms of the environment, natural decay, and trees. The flows of the leaves, the clouds moving, or the wind blowing are repetitious, not unlike the beating of the heart. Decay is ubiquitous. Branches fall and moss claims them; seeds drop, shrivel and are absorbed by the earth. Trees have a strong physical relationship to the body. The tree trunk resembles a torso; its gnarled roots correspond to the muscular system of the body while aging bark appears skin like. In these elements - rhythms, decay and trees - I recognize the relationship between nature, the human body, and degeneration. My work attempts to accentuate this connection.

This body of work is inspired, in particular, by the environmental destruction caused by industrial advancement and the subsequent disregard for the reclamation of the landscape. In 2006, a pipeline company was granted access to our family property. Through this experience, where both the landowner and the land were exploited, I personally came to understand what happens when our society favors industrial advancement over individual rights and stewardship of the environment. As a result, a focus of the work is “ecocide”; a term utilized by Jared Diamond, the author of *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, to describe the destruction of resources on which societies depend. I believe that the exploitation of nature is the result of a society that has lost the sense that it is part of a larger whole. In order to address these issues I have developed work that metaphorically elicits a relationship between the body and nature.

To emphasize the interrelations between nature and the body, I introduce dual readings in the work. My point of departure often has a biological basis, such as dendrites, veins or cell structures and the work develops to mimic elements from the natural environment. For example, veins and arteries transform into a mass of twigs. At times, the starting point is the land or land that has been misused. As seen in the work titled *Tenacity*, a sculpture could begin as an aerial map of a desiccated wheat field - perhaps simulating dormant winter trees or a landscape ravaged by a forest fire - and end up resembling the hair on a body.

Through a process, that is repetitive, time consuming and on a personal level, cathartic, I create large sculptures and installations with simple materials. It is important for me to use my hands to form objects, as this physical process allows me to fully engage with the work. This ‘hands on’ approach also reflects my desire that the work be anti-technological. Using a methodical process, much of the work manifests from repetitive twisting, molding, and cutting of shapes. These time intensive activities fulfill a personal need to remain continuously active. Additionally, repetition simulates rhythms and fractals found in nature.

In this body of work I am attempting to evoke thoughts and experiences that go back and forth between the beautiful and the unpleasant. The delicate wires I have used often suggest fragile and aesthetically pleasing vistas, however, the size of the work and the objects/spaces created contrast this quiet nature to present powerful, dangerous or destructive undertones often alluding to remnants of something that once existed and to an underlying danger.

The work in this exhibition intersects with the traditions of installation, sculpture and drawing. In my work, the lines drawn and the multi-dimensional images portrayed are my expressions of the vulnerability of nature and the body. I believe that art is an important vehicle for communication and, as such, I attempt to emphasize the potential consequences of industrial progress when it takes precedence over concern for the environment.

Sherri Chaba
October 2007

Sherri Chaba
List of Works

Image #	Date	Title	Medium	Size (hwd)
1	2006-07	Tenacity	plastic coated wire, tentest	8' x 12' x 1/2"
2			detail	
3	2007	Questioning the Line	steel wire, nails	10' x 14' x 12'
4			detail	
5	2007	Truncated	steel wire	10' x 17' x 14'
6			detail	
7	2007	Atrophic Utopia	conduit, mesh, plastic coated wire	6' 6" x 10' x 10'
8			detail	
9	2006-07	Trace	plastic coated wire	10' x 6' x 1'
10			detail	
11	2007	Palimpsest I, II, III	plexiglass, wood, drypoint on paper, ink on plexi-glass.	18 1/2" x 30 1/2"
12	2007	Topography I, II, III	welded steel, steel wire	2' x 4' 3' x 3' 1 1/2' x 1 1/2'
13	2007	Consequences of Progress	Wire, wax, clay, wasp nest, ink, wood, steel, plexiglass, rock, rubber	variable

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